

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SS-20 /026 R

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DRAFTED BY NEA/WSBUTCHER:HE

APPROVED BY NEA:WSBUTCHER

S/S:MR.FRY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 095797

TOSEC 438

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 2907 ACTION STATE 07 MAY 1974.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2907

DEPT PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP MARR EG

SUBJ: SUEZ CANAL SALVAGE

REF: CAIRO 2511; CAIRO 2473

1. IN PAST FEW DAYS WE HAVE HAD FURTHER SCA INQUIRIES ABOUT BARRACCA'S PLANS. ACCORDINGLY, IN AN EFFORT TO CALM THIS GROWING EGYPTIAN RESTIVENESS, A/DCM AND I CALLED TODAY ON SCA DIRECTOR MASHHOUR. USING POSITION PAPER WHICH ATHERTON HAD LEFT WITH ME, I EXPLAINED THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY FINALIZING ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE U.S. NAVY UNDERTAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SALVAGE JOB AND SUB-CONTRACTING MOST OF THE WORK TO MURPHY PACIFIC. I RECALLED AN EARLIER SCA INDICATION THAT IT WOULD
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MUCH PREFER TO HAVE THE US NAVY ASSUME SUCH

RESPONSIBILITY AND STRESSED THAT OUR PRESENT THINKING IS CONSISTENT WITH THAT DESIRE. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR BARRACCA TO COME UNTIL THESE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED.

2. I ADDED THAT ONCE THIS TAKES PLACE, WE WOULD ACTIVATE THE US NAVY HEAVY LIFT CRAFT NOW IN SUBIC BAY AND BEGIN TOWING THEM TO THE CANAL. DEPENDING UPON THEIR DEPARTURE DATE, THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT ARRIVE UNTIL JULY. HOWEVER, WE WOULD PLAN TO BEGIN A DIVING SURVEY OF THE VESSELS ABOUT 10 DAYS OR SO AFTER THE AFOREMENTIONED ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN FINALIZED. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, EXPLOSIVE CUTTING WORK TO REMOVE SUPERSTRUCTURES OF SUNKEN VESSELS SHOULD BE ABLE TO BEGIN. I WAS AWARE THAT SCA GENERALLY AND MASHHOUR SPECIFICALLY HAVE BEEN UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE WITHIN THE GOE TO BEGIN SALVAGE WORK, AND I HOPED THAT THE INFORMATION I WAS NOW GIVING HIM WOULD BE HELPFUL IN EASING THAT PRESSURE.

3. MASHHOUR WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE AND EXPRESSED HIS THANKS TO USG FOR ITS HELP. HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED MESSAGE FROM WASHINGTON SAYING BARRACCA HAD CALLED ON GHORBAL THREE DAYS AGO. BARRACCA ALLEGEDLY TOLD GHORBAL THAT US NAVY WOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR SALVAGE AND THAT AS SOON AS A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION HAS BEEN MADE, WHICH WAS EXPECTED SHORTLY, SALVAGE WORK COULD BEGIN. MASHHOUR SAID SCA DIVERS AND OTHER ASSETS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST IN SALVAGE WORK.

4. MASHHOUR ALSO EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE AT NIMBUS STAR OPERATION AND THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE SHOWN BY US PERSONNEL INVOLVED THEREIN. I TOLD MASHHOUR THAT NIMBUS STAR REPRESENTS NOT ONLY A PRACTICAL EFFORT ON OUR PART TO BE OF HELP TO EGYPT, BUT ALSO SYMBOLIZES THE ABILITY OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS TO WORK IN CLOSE COOPERATION.

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5. COMMENT: TRUST I HAVE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY ALLAYED MASHHOUR'S AND GOE'S MISGIVINGS OVER DELAY IN INITIATING SALVAGE PROJECT. HOWEVER, THE SOONER WE CAN TELL HIM WE ARE NOW PROCEEDING AND WHEN BARRACCA OR USN PERSONNEL ARE ARRIVING, THE BETTER IT WILL BE.
EILTS

UNQUOTE RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NAVAL FORCES, DREDGING, SUEZ CANAL, TOSEC 438
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE095797
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: HE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740112-0682
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740561/aaaacbyg.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CAIRO 2511; CAIRO 2473
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Aug-2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <10 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUEZ CANAL SALVAGE
TAGS: BEXP, MARR, EG
To: JERUSALEM
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005